

THE AERIAL MACHINE.

A "Wellwisher and Constant Subscriber" is not content without, as he says, a little grumbling at our award, which made him the loser of a wager: he contends that the machine, as depicted in *THE BUILDERS*, is not seen from underneath, as we stated; we will, however, endeavour for his satisfaction, and that of numerous readers, to make the matter clear, which it is rather difficult to do from the drawing alone. In the first place, let the spectator suppose himself standing on the left side of the field of view, and that the machine is going away from him, far over head, and bearing to the right; he sees the machine then as he would a huge bird from the rear, the tail towards him, and the wings wide expanded out on each side. Our correspondent is mistaken about the convergency of the lines; if he will apply a rule, he will find that the extreme ends of the wings vanish in an horizon under the picture, and with reference to the upright standards, it should be noted that they go under as well as above the plane of the wings; however, let the spectator get a clear notion as we have put it, namely, that the machine is "going a-head" from him, but bearing to the right, and that he sees it from underneath, and we then think the mystery of the drawing will vanish.

We may say a word as to the circles which some do not understand; these will be understood as being the vanes or propellers in rapid action exhibiting themselves as plane circles—those who look at a wheel in quick motion will perceive the same effect.

We have not committed ourselves to any opinion as to the probability of the success of this particular machine, and we should think it especially impertinent and presumptuous in us to do so. We have been much amused at the grave calculations of our contemporaries, who have resolved it into a simple question of arithmetical calculation, and proved by figures its impossibility; but we question whether they have got all the figures, and if we suppose one or two little items left out, we all know what must become of the calculations. For our parts, we are as firmly convinced of the practicability of man's imitating the aerial as the aquatic travellers. It has been objected by some that the air is not man's natural element; to which we reply, neither is water. It was objected to us many years ago that there was a difference in aerial and ordinary navigation—that in the latter we ride in one medium (water) and are propelled by another (the wind), while in the former we ride in and depend upon the same for propulsion. This argument is done away with by steam, and the analogies of sailing in air and water are now well established; the supporting bodies are only fluids of different densities, and when we see iron floating in the one, why may we not look for it in the other? We contend that there are no physical impossibilities in the case; all we require is a proper machine; whether Mr. Henson's be that we do not undertake to say, but we shall look confidently for a few years to reveal to us a successful accomplishment of the project. We caution the prophets to leave wide loop-holes in their predictions, or we may soon have the laugh against them, as the experience of railway and trans-atlantic travelling have served to supply against the calculations of our Bastricks, Lardners, and others; figures go for any thing or nothing, according as you have the facts to base them upon.

NIXON'S STATUE OF WILLIAM IV.—This fine statue is to be placed at the end of King William-street, at the city end of London-bridge, towards which the front of the statue will be directly placed. The execution of this work was intrusted to Mr. Nixon (with whose beautiful statues in Goldsmiths'-hall most of our readers must be familiar) by the Common Council, who voted 1,600*l.* towards the expense of the statue; to this the Commissioners of Sewers added 600*l.* more. The whole credit of originating the statue is due to the citizens of London, whom we are rejoiced to see becoming liberal patrons of the Fine Arts. The material of the statue is granite, and in that respect it will be unique. The art of working this difficult material to a fine surface may be said to have been discovered by Mr. Nixon; and the excellence to which he has brought it is such that it equals the specimens of the Egyptian method of working it, of which the finest examples may be found in Lord Prudhoe's lions in the British Museum.

RINGWOOD ALMSHOUSES.

We beg to call attention to a letter on this subject also; some abuse would appear to have been practised in this case as well, and these abuses, now that almshouses are on the tapis, must be slipped in the bud. It is of little use that the legislature should have been checking one set of abuses in the administration of public charity trusts, if we are to have another set of abuses substituted for them. We shall be glad if our correspondents will furnish us with the necessary information sought for by the letter referred to.

April 11, 1843.

SIR,—I trust you will be able in your next number to give us the same information, as to who was the successful competitor for the almshouses at Ringwood, as you have in the case of those at Spalding. To the unsuccessful candidates it is satisfactory to know by whom they have been defeated; and as a general principle, I consider it very desirable that publicity should be given to the results of competitions, as it may have a tendency to check any attempt at unfair dealing, which we know to be, unfortunately, too common in such cases, arising in some instances from a wish on the part of persons acting as judges to serve their friends, and in others from their incapacity to decide on the merits of the designs submitted.

I do not of course intend the above remarks to apply in this case, but I cannot help thinking that no time has been lost in the matter, inasmuch as the letter sent with the plans which were returned to the unsuccessful competitors, was dated March 18, and in the *Times* of yesterday I see an advertisement to builders to tender for the works, in which it is stated that the quantities have been taken out by a competent surveyor, so that the drawings and specification, as sent in, could have required but little attention (which is not very common in such cases), or the surveyor could have had but little time for his estimate.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
A CONSTANT SUBSCRIBER.

FREEMASONS OF THE CHURCH.

Sixth Chapter, held on Easter Tuesday, April 18.

THE Rev. George Pocock, B.C.L., Vicar of Hailsham, Sussex, in the chair.

The discussion of the laws being resumed, one of the chaplains proposed that before the commencement of business at any chapter, one of the chaplains present should repeat a short collect; and that the college, on the anniversary of its foundation, attend divine service in some cathedral or other church.

James Field, Esq., architect to St. Thomas's Hospital, Southwark; F. Bushell, architect, of Mortimer-street, surveyor to the Earl of Craven; and — Perry, Esq., architect, of Spencer-street, Northampton-square, were elected architectural fellows.

The Rev. F. P. Pocock, B.A., one of the chaplains, was elected Latin secretary.

William Papineau, Esq., of Bromley, was elected professor of architectural chemistry.

Four casts, taken by the late Mr. Flaxman, R.A., from sculptures in the chapter-house of York Minster, were presented by Henry Stothard, Esq., F.S.A.; to whom and to several other donors the thanks of the college were ordered to be given.

The secretary having received by post a specimen of asphalt, one of the properties of which was stated to be, when applied to roofs, the prevention of fire, test thereof was made by placing the specimen upon the fire of the room, when it was found to blaze in a manner which would no doubt have been very edifying to our correspondent "Heart-burn Fire-brand."

ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL AND FEES.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE BUILDER.

SIR,—I wish to call your attention to the fees exacted in our cathedrals. It is in the metropolitan cathedral that the system of fees is still found to exist in the greatest perfection; there is a fee for the body of the Church—a fee for the choir—a fee for the whispering gallery—a fee for the library—a fee for the clock-work—a fee for the great bell—a fee for the little bell—a fee for the bell at the top—a fee for the vaults at the bottom; wherever an Englishman would examine, in any corner of his own national church built by the contributions of his ancestors, he is met by a mob of money-takers, check-takers, and the like, vociferating fees! fees! fees! As a list of those fees cannot but prove ac-

ceptable as a curiosity, I subjoin, for the benefit of the public, the latest edition, published by authority.

Entrance at the North Portico	0 2
Exterior Galleries including Whispering Gallery	0 6
Library	0 2
Model of Trophy Room	0 6
Clock and Bell	0 4
The Hall	2 0
Vaults	1 0
A curious Geometrical Staircase	0 2

Total 4 10

Is not this disgraceful? Is there not something indecorous, not to say worse, in converting the house of the Most High into a means of extortion? If the public cannot be gratuitously admitted at least to the body of the church without danger of injury to the monuments it contains, let them be excluded altogether; but if, on the contrary, they can be admitted, as it has been proved in the case of the British Museum, National Gallery, and Hampton Court Palace, they may be, without the slightest danger; then, in the name of common sense, abolish those mean and sordid twopenny exactions, and let the poor and the sorrowful strengthen their good resolutions or soothe their thoughts in the temple devoted to God's service without being disturbed by the vexatious demands of the "money makers."

VIATOR.

THE LONDON WOOD-PAVING COMPANY.—The mode adopted for the formation of the London Wood-Paving Company is of a nature so uncommon as to call for particular notice. Instead of relying upon the announcement of a number of high-sounding names, at the head of a prospectus, whose possessors might be assumed to have satisfied themselves individually of the feasibility of the plan, and of its certainty of success—assumptions too often most unwisely made—this Company is constituted upon the real merits of the undertaking. A very large proportion of the shares intended to be issued were subscribed for, at the outset, by parties who made a deliberate inquiry into the peculiar advantages of Ferring's Safety Wood Paving, as well as the details with which it was proposed to be carried into profitable operation. Fully convinced by their investigation, these subscribers proceeded to hold a general meeting; and, after a public examination of the objects of the Company, the means of accomplishment, the manner of carrying them into effect, and the inevitably successful results that must ensue, they very properly selected from among themselves a Board of Directors, highly respectable as principals of firms and men of business, and conversant, from the first, with duties which the practical nature of their own occupations must render them eminently qualified to perform. The subscribers, having thus exercised an undoubted privilege, further evinced their judgment by appointing Mr. Lee Stevens to the office of superintendent; a gentleman who, from his great practical experience in wood paving, his celebrity as a lecturer and writer on the subject, and his well-known industry and perseverance, must carry with him more than the common elements of success, into an undertaking in every other respect deserving of public encouragement.—*Correspondent.*

WOOD PAVEMENT.—At the meeting of the Society of Arts last Wednesday, Mr. Davis described his stereoprism combination as applicable to wood pavements. It appears that this wood pavement—a sample of which is laid down in Lombard-street, is composed of single and compound rectangular prisms, the size of which is varied according to the purposes for which the pavement is required. For barns and other places where the floors sustain a great weight, the blocks are cut in an oblique direction, which prevents any lateral pressure against the abutments. In order to facilitate the laying down of this pavement, six blocks are wedged together in a frame, and as each block is thus supported by the six surrounding blocks, it would take a force equal to several tons to drive any of them out of their position. In alluding to the great objection to wood pavement, the slipperiness of its surface, he proposed that the vertical fibre of the wood should be shewn to the horses' feet, and deep grooves cut on the surface of the blocks by a machine which he has invented for the purpose. The expense of removing the blocks so as to obtain access to the water-pipes and gas-pipes under the surface, so constantly required in our public thoroughfares, has been often urged as an objection to the general adoption of wood pavement. Mr. Davis says he has removed this difficulty by running a frame about eighteen inches wide, composed of these blocks, up the centre of each street; this frame can be soon separated from the adjoining parts of the wood pavement, and when the mass is thus dislocated, particular blocks can be detached with great facility. When the pavement is required for public halls and similar places, he suggests that the block should be cut from oaks and lime trees, which would give the flooring a varied and agreeable appearance.